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AUTHOR Seidman, I. E.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

The East Longmeadow/University of Massachusetts Professional Development School project is a school district/university collaborative for teacher preparation. A goal of the program is to bridge the gap between a university-based school of education and public schools in preparing new teachers. To accomplish this goal the collaborative has developed a clinical site as part of a high school/middle school teacher education program. The basic components of the program are: (1) placement of a cohort of student teachers at the professional development school (PDS) site; (2) developing a community of mentors; (3) on-site instruction for the student teachers and the mentor teachers; (4) planning, assessment, and training workshops; (5) exchange of faculty resources; (6) professional development projects; and (7) dissemination of knowledge gained from activities of the project, including assisting other higher education institutions to develop PDS projects. (IAH)

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EAST LONGMEADOW/UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL PROJECT

I. E. Seidman, Professor of Education, University of
Massachusetts at Amherst *11-01003*
Helen Schneider, Lecturer in School of Education, University of
Massachusetts at Amherst
Peter J. Cannone, Associate Superintendent, East Longmeadow
School District

The East Longmeadow/University of Massachusetts Professional Development School collaborative is entering its seventh year of operation. The original initiative for the program came from Peter Cannone, then Principal of East Longmeadow High School (ELHS) and now Associate Superintendent of the District. Sensing an impending shortage of teachers, and responding to a need to reinvigorate a veteran faculty, he invited the Secondary Teacher Education Program of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst to join East Longmeadow staff in a collaborative effort to transform East Longmeadow High School into the equivalent of a "teaching hospital." By responding to needs he felt for his school, and by seeing the staff development possibilities of collaboration with the University, he anticipated the literature of the educational reform movement which was just then beginning to describe the concept of the Professional Development School.

The Secondary Teacher Education program was dissatisfied with the conventional placement of student teachers in isolated schools. At many such sites, the dichotomy between the faculty of the School of Education and the faculty of the practicum site all too often was reinforced rather than bridged. The STEP

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faculty saw the proposed collaboration as an opportunity to develop a relationship with ELHS which would benefit university student teaching candidates in several ways:

- a. student teachers would be welcomed by the entire high school faculty and staff;
- b. student teachers would have maximum peer support by being placed in a cohort of between 8-12 at the school;
- c. the distant relationship between university and high school faculty would be turned into a collegial one in which the two faculties shared the goal of preparing new teachers.

Both partners in the collaborative believed that joining together in the preparation of new teachers would be a source of professional and intellectual renewal for their faculties.

Over the next few months Cannone met with Professor Earl Seidman of the School of Education to conceptualize the collaboration in teacher education between East Longmeadow High School and the Secondary Teacher Education Program. Dr. Helen Schneider of the School of Education joined the planning team at the critical first phase of implementation, and Cannone, Seidman and Schneider became co-directors of the project. Through initial meetings with interested ELHS faculty, a jointly planned pilot project emerged, a pre-practicum field experience for thirty-five students from the introductory course in the STEP program. Issues of mutual commitment, compatibility, and mutual respect

were tested and proven sound.

Our initial efforts were supported by our being designated a pilot Professional Development School project by the Field Center for Teaching and Learning. This designation allowed us to participate with six other projects across the Commonwealth in exploring issues that are generic to the Professional Development School concept.

A major characteristic of the program is that its continued growth and development has arisen out of the faculty from STEP and ELHS working together on the realities of the project; each new development of the program has arisen organically from an earlier phase of the program. Twice a year, workshops provide the opportunity for major reviews and assessments of our progress to date, and the chance to brainstorm possibilities for new developments.

What follows is a description of our basic goals and objectives for the program and the components of the program we have developed to accomplish those goals.

Goals: Our basic goal for this project is to bridge the dichotomy that often exists between university-based schools of education and the public schools that play such an influential role in preparing new teachers. To accomplish that goal, our objective has been to develop a clinical site teacher education program patterned to some degree upon the notion of a teaching

hospital. Such a clinical site would allow university and high school faculty to collegially design and carry out a rational student teaching experience for a cohort of student teachers at a clinical site. Our fundamental intended outcomes are:

1. for student teachers to feel welcomed and supported by the entire high school.
2. for student teachers to gain the benefits of the experience of a cohort of mentor teachers.
3. for mentor teachers to feel less individual isolation in their professional work.
4. for mentor teachers to have the opportunity to share their years of experience with prospective teachers and feel a sense of intellectual and professional opportunity in the project.
5. for School of Education faculty and staff to be able to carry out a more effective student teaching program in collaboration with colleagues in the high schools, promoting coherence between what student teachers learn at the university and in the school.
6. for members of the collaboration to help develop additional professional development school sites, using the leadership and experience of the East Longmeadow mentors.
7. to contribute to the developing concepts of mentoring and of professional development schools in the Commonwealth of

Massachusetts as we move to the implementation of JTTP and prepare for full implementation of the role of mentor under the new certification guidelines.

To achieve these desired outcomes, we have developed a collaborative program that has the following basic components:

1. Placement of a "cohort" of student teachers at the professional development school site. Note: numbers alone do not make a cohort. A basic component of the program is developing a sense of community within the student teaching cohort and between them and the faculty, staff, and students of the high school.
2. Developing a community of mentors: The second essential ingredient of the program is developing a cadre of experienced mentor teachers who work individually and as a group to support and teach the student teachers at this critical phase of their teacher education program. Essential to the development of this community is the opportunity for the mentor teachers to reflect on their experience, explore the research and literature on mentoring and teacher education, and share that reflection and exploration with their colleagues and the student teachers.
3. Basic to the development of a sense of community among student teachers and mentors, and to the collaboration between university and high school/middle school faculty is

on-site instruction at ELHS. Central to the professional development school project at ELHS are two on-site seminars: one for the student teachers and one for the mentor teachers, both co-taught by high school and university faculty. These seminars held at East Longmeadow High School provide the forum for mentor faculty to develop their perspectives and skills and for student teachers to process their experience and have access to mentors as resources for their growth and development.

4. Planning, Assessment, and Training workshops. Twice each year, ELHS/Middle School faculty and University faculty come together in workshops to review the progress of the program to date, make suggestions for revisions, plan for new developments, and receive and give instruction on issues of mentoring. These workshops are held at the conference center at Mount Holyoke college, a site half way between the University and ELHS during the year, and on the campus of the University in the summer. Student teachers attend the workshop held during the year.
5. Exchange of faculty resources: In addition to on-site instruction carried out by university and high school faculty, faculty from ELHS take part on the university campus in teacher education courses as both guest lecturers and as regular members of the instructional staff. Faculty from the University offer workshops for high school and

middle school faculty. In addition, a growing number of mentor faculty from East Longmeadow High School and Birchland Park Middle School are seeking advanced degrees at the University and other institutions of higher education.

6. Professional Development Projects: At this stage in the program, individual and small groups of mentor faculty, in conjunction with university faculty, are developing a series of projects designed to further develop and refine the efforts of the professional development site. The projects listed below are a response to perceived needs of the program and carry the possibility of graduate credit:
 - a. the preparation by the mentors of a handbook on mentoring
 - b. a video-tape designed to explore and illuminate alternative models of teaching
 - c. an expanded program of pre-practicum on-site field experiences.
7. Over the next three years we need to foster the development of the components listed above, support efforts at dissemination and assist in the development of Professional Development School projects by other institutions of higher education. The ELPS/UMA collaborative has resulted in mentor faculty at ELHS and BPMS gaining considerable

experience and insight into the complexities, problems, and possibilities of a professional development site. Mentor faculty from East Longmeadow have been active in supporting STEP's efforts to develop additional professional development school sites: one an urban site at Holyoke High School and the other at Greenfield High School, Greenfield, Massachusetts. In cooperation with the State Department of Education, our collaborative is beginning to play a supporting role in other higher education institutional planning for professional development efforts.

Our program components are designed to place special emphasis on reflective inquiry and exploring alternative models of teaching, using involvement in pre-service teacher education as a vehicle of professional development for experienced teachers, stressing the role of experienced teachers as mentors for new teachers, and using the resources of the public school to develop an on-site teacher education effort that then promotes change and reform of both school and university curriculum and teaching methods.

We have accomplished a great deal in our initial project. Eighty-five student teachers have graduated from the site and have enjoyed a high rate of placement in teaching positions. Over thirty faculty and administrators at the high school and middle school have participated in the program and have received

preparation to be mentors.

The more we develop the more we see there is to develop. The program has survived to this date because of the generous commitment of the East Longmeadow School district which has allocated \$10,000 to the project over each of the last seven years and because of additional modest support as a pilot project of the Field Center for Teaching and Learning. In addition, the Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education has supported the program.

For more information, contact Professors I. E. Seidman and Helen Schneider, School of Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003 (413) 545-3126 and Peter J. Cannone, Associate Superintendent, East Longmeadow School District, East Longmeadow, MA 01028 (413) 525-5450.

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